Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

In the next issue of Liberty Mr. Salter will reply to Mr. Yarros's last series of articles in criticism of his position.

It is very notable when an organ of the typographic art adopts the new typography. See the article from the "International Art Printer" in another column. Its June number has appeared, set without "justification," and very handsome it is. This reform is a sure winner.

The "Sun" copies from Liberty the statement that Dana will hear from the Anarchists before this campaign is over, and inquires: "When, particularly? When William Jennings Bryan comes to town?" Most prescient "Sun," you have hit it very accurately. The thunderbolt will fall at just about that time. But William Jennings Bryan will not launch it. His arrival will be a mere coincidence.

In comment upon my statement that I have rarely, if ever, used the phrase "philosophical Anarchism," Mr. Byington cruelly reminds me that at least I have used it on the title-page of "Instead of a Book." This is a very good one on me. It is none the less true, however, that I do not like the phrase, and for my defence I must turn to Alexander Pope: "But seen too oft, familiar with its face, we first endure, then pity, then embrace."

The translation into German, by Alfons Fedor Cohn, of the first memoir of Proudhon's "What is Property?" is now complete, and has been published by B. Zack, 45 Oppelnerstrasse, Berlin S. O. 33, Germany, of whom the book may be procured by sending a money order to his address. The price is fifty cents for the paper-cover edition; in cloth, seventy-five cents. The book ought to have a large sale among German-Americans.

It would be superfluous to invite the reader's attention to Bernard Shaw's reply to Mr. Yarros, printed on the sixth and seventh pages; for no one ever fails, on seeing Shaw's signature, to read the matter over it. He is one of the few writers who absolutely command attention. In the next issue Mr. Yarros, I expect, will have much to say, and I a little, about Mr. Shaw's arguments. Meanwhile I print in the present issue an editorial from the Newcastle "Chronicle," which shows in a very forceful way how the municipalization which Mr. Shaw advocates works in England. The "Chronicle" is owned by Mr. Joseph Cowen, one of the foremost of England's old-time radicals and once a picturesque and noble figure in English politics, and is one of the few daily newspapers for which one can entertain respect.

A new organization has been formed in London known as the Individualist Club, and Herbert Spencer has joined it. The New York "Recorder," with characteristic ignorance, suggests that "a Socialistic hermit" would be the logical counterpart of this connection. It evidently fancies that an Individualist cannot consistently join any organization, and that a Socialist cannot isolate himself from society. Such crudity and misconception at this late day are strange even in a "great newspaper."

The Chicago "Chronicle," an able Democratic gold paper, protests against the haste with which its contemporaries of the same faith are rushing into the arms of McKinleyism. The Republican policy is as criminal as it has ever been, and no Democrat can consistently vote for it on the plea that the Populist infamy is even greater than the Republican; therefore a gold ticket should be nominated by the honest Democrats. "Moral considerations of the most momentous character," it continues, "demand that honest men shall not be left to the abhorrent alternative of a choice between evils both of them amounting to crime." Strange that it does not occur to the "Chronicle" that its honest men can stay away from the polls and thus refrain from supporting either infamy. The "Chronicle's" opposition to Republicanism is more sincere and intelligent than that of the Democratic converts to McKinleyism, but its passion for voting is as great as that of the most irrational political fanatics.

The ablest leader of the Democratic silver forces is unquestionably Governor Altgeld. Were he American-born, he would certainly have received the nomination of the Chicago convention. He was the most forceful, aggressive, and influential personality at that gathering, and even his enemies were forced to pay tributes to his power and shrewdness. But, since the natural and logical candidate was ruled out by the constitution, the convention found itself without commanding personalities. Bland, Boies, Matthews, McLean, Blackburn, and the rest of them could hardly be taken seriously by the delegates. Their names were presented without faith or enthusiasm. This explains the Bryan accident. Bryan was "made" by a speech. An hour before he spoke on the adoption of the platform no one regarded him as a probable victor. His speech was eloquent, effective, and clever, and his nomination was the prize awarded him for that single effort. It is absurd, of course, to nominate a man for the presidency on the strength of a single speech, but first-rate ability of any kind was so scarce among the available candidates that Bryan's exceptional oratory appealed to the delegates with peculiar force. Bryan's success is accidental, and the accident would have been impossible had not accident debarred Altgeld from claiming the prize.

We hear a great deal these days about an "honest dollar"; the gold-bug orators and editors shriek at every opportunity that to pay a hundred-cent debt with a fifty-cent dollar is theft and repudiation, and that therefore the advocates of free silver are thieves and repudiators. If this be true,—a question not discussed in this paragraph,—then, if free coinage of silver becomes a reality, we shall speedily find out how many honest men there are among the gold-bugs. For the fact of free coinage will compel no man to pay his debts in fifty-cent dollars against his will. All debtors will still be at liberty to pay their debts in hundred-cent dollars. Every gold-bug, therefore, who shall take advantage of a free-coinage enactment to pay his creditors in fifty-cent dollars will be, if judged by the gold-bug standard of morality, a thief and a repudiator. And should such a gold-bug attempt to excuse himself on the ground that, when his debtors pay him in fifty-cent dollars, it is impossible for him to pay his creditors in hundred-cent dollars, the plea will be of no validity. The highly moral man does not treat Jones dishonestly because he himself has been treated dishonestly by Smith. He may not be able to pay to Jones more than he has received from Smith, but he can at least say to Jones: "Give me a receipt for half of what I owe you, and grant me an extension on the balance, which I will pay as soon as I can earn the money." Besides, most of the gold-bugs are creditors to a much larger extent than debtors. If Smith owes a gold-bug one hundred dollars and pays him in fifty-cent dollars, this gold-bug, if he owes fifty dollars to Jones, can hand to Jones, in full cancellation of his debt, the hundred fifty-cent dollars received from Smith. And he *will* do so, if he is an "honest man" and a believer in an "honest dollar." When free coinage comes, we will set a watch on these gold-bugs. No Diogenes, though equipped, in place of a lantern, with an electric light of a million candle-power, will be able to find an honest man among them.

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

Mr. Bolton Hall's Arguments.

Mr. Tucker's comments on Mr. Hall's communication in Liberty of May 30 render it unnecessary for me to make any general reply to his criticisms, while my rejoinder to Mr. E. O. Brown incidentally deals with the more important objections urged by Mr. Hall. If I add anything now to what has already been said, it is simply because Mr. Hall's letter affords a tempting opportunity to point out the truth of the criticism, made long ago by a prominent opponent, that Single Taxers skip from agricultural rents to city rents, from Ricardian to monopolistic rents, from ratios to amounts, with the lightness of an acrobat. It is impossible to match them for shiftiness, confusion, and vagueness. The one thing which the Single-Tax folk *will* not bear in mind and stick to is the fact that their plan is offered as a solution of the entire social problem, as a remedy for all of the industrial ills of the farmers, laborers, and small *bourgeois* traders. If they would but stick to their own text, it would be possible to carry on profitable controversy with them.

"How," I asked, "would the Single Tax help labor in England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Italy, and France," since there is no land speculation in those countries worth mentioning, and since Mr. Brown told us that the Single Tax was a method of doing away with such speculation? Mr. Hall's answer to this is that I cannot have heard of the immense fortunes made in Berlin and in Paris on the rise of land values and of the ruin that came to many of the old Italian families from land speculation in Rome, but that I surely must have heard of the duke of Westminster's possessions in London and of the coal mines held idle in England.

Now, I have heard of these things, and find them too insignificant to consider in connection with the great problem which Single Taxers claim to have solved. I suspect that Mr. Hall has himself the vaguest notion of the things he refers to; he has just "heard of them," literally speaking, and deems it convenient to drag them into the argument. The story of the reconstruction of Paris, Berlin, and Rome is very interesting, but hardly "worth mentioning" in a discussion of sweeping land reforms affecting millions of families. Perhaps Mr. Hall can find a dozen vacant lots in Dublin that are held for speculative purposes, but I am not aware that any of the serious writers who have discussed the Irish land question have thought it necessary to dwell upon that significant factor.

No greater contrast can be imagined than that between the French and Irish systems of land tenure. England, Scotland, Germany, and Italy have more or less mixed systems, but in Ireland we find the pure system of great landlords controlling the soil, while in France, thanks to the great Revolution, there is a pure system of small farms and occupying ownership. I ask Mr. Hall, in the first place, what the Single Tax would do for Ireland. Never mind the few vacant lots of Dublin; let us conscientiously inquire into the effect of the Single Tax on the millions of tenants. If they had to pay as much to the State as they now pay to the private landlords, their condition would clearly remain unchanged. Assuming, however, that they pay higher rents than the economic value of their holdings warrants, it must be admitted, of course, that they would be advantaged by a reduction of their burdens. But the real question is why they should pay any rent at all! Occupying ownership would entirely free them from their rent burden, and land reformers who insist on taxing them have to show that taxed land is better for the Irish tenantry than free land. It seems perfectly clear that, if Single Taxers were fair and consistent in their demand for "free natural opportunities," they would admit that in Ireland's case what is wanted is not any kind of tax, but the lifting of all rent burdens from the tenants' backs.

Ireland, by the way, which has known anti-rent agitations and struggles, does not appear to "take much stock" in the Single Tax. Yet in no country is the land question more pressing and vital. Is there no lesson to Single Taxers in this fact?

France has a peasant proprietary, but other than rent burdens have kept the masses poor and miserable. A remedy that would free them from such taxes and burdens as they are compelled to bear would certainly be a blessing to them, but how would a tax on land values help them, and what sense is there in proposing such a tax? Again, there is some land speculation in the great cities, but isn't it the height of absurdity to tax the millions of agricultural producers in order to make it necessary for the few city speculators to improve their vacant lots?

The Single Taxers would avoid a great source of confusion if they would separate the problem of city land from that of agricultural land. The land question is one of tenure for agricultural producers and such city laborers as wish to make a living by tilling the soil. France and Switzerland, by their system of peasant proprietary, have indicated the true solution of the land question,—occupying ownership. To test the value of the Single Tax it is necessary to show that, if applied in those countries, it would redound to the benefit of the masses. Nothing of the kind has ever been attempted.

As for the effects of speculation in land where it exists to any appreciable extent, they have very little to do with the industrial position of the laborer or farmer. As I have already pointed out, it is only in new and sparsely-populated countries that speculation in land rages, and in these there is plenty of free land at the disposal of those who are fit for agricultural labor.

Mr. Hall asserts that, wherever "low taxes and rapid advances make it more profitable to keep land vacant or partly improved, such is the practice," and he adds that land is everywhere so held. I do not dispute these statements, but the real and relevant question is how *much* land is so held. To pretend that in any country in the world this factor is important enough to account for the evils besetting industry and society is to be guilty of the most reckless disregard of everything that has been established by the most competent testimony. There is no proof to sustain the assertion, and it betrays such ignorance of economic literature that one can hardly consider it with any degree of patience. Of the evils which are to be found in this or any other country, land speculation is unquestionably one of the most insignificant, so far as its effects on the rate of wages or the demand for labor is concerned.

But, even if the evil were as grave as Mr. Hall imagines it to be, his remedy would be totally unnecessary. It is strange that he, too, ignores the contention that occupying ownership would free all land held for speculative purposes without injury to any non-speculative holders. Single Taxers dwell on the difficulties of freeing land by the method so often pointed out in Liberty,—that, namely, of refusing to respect titles not based on actual use and occupation,—but these difficulties really do not concern them at all. *They* are governmentalists, and, since they propose to adopt the Single Tax by legislation, it is impossible to see why it does not occur to them that a law declaring all vacant land free and giving owners the option of improving it within a short time or losing it would accomplish the purpose in view much more directly and speedily than the Single-Tax method. From their own point of view, speculation can be more effectually suppressed by direct legislation than by taxation of land values generally.

If such legislation against land speculation were advocated, libertarians would naturally oppose it, but not because they believe in freedom to speculate in land. And it would be pertinent for the authoritarians to argue that the alternative of passive resistance or failure to afford protection is less certain than prohibitory legislation. At present this is not the issue. Governmentalists who wish to do away with land speculation are bound to show that they cannot secure their object except by imposing a tax on all land-holders, speculative as well as non-speculative.

As to whether a tax would really free vacant land or compel owners to improve it, I refer Mr. Hall to my rejoinder to Mr. Brown, wherein the point has received attention.

V. Y.

The Drowning Man's Contract.

A word or two with reference to Mr. Tucker's comment on my solution of the problem advanced by Mr. Salter for the purpose of discrediting my position on the subject of the enforcement of just contracts.

Should the agreement between a drowning man and a heartless rescuer involving the transfer of the former's entire property to the latter be enforced in a society which acts upon the principle that equal liberty must be strictly enforced and that all contracts entered into under a condition of equal freedom must be enforced? I gather from Mr. Salter's remarks on the meaning of justice that he would not enforce such an agreement. Not, however, because he is unwilling to enforce all just contracts, but because he deems the contract in question an unjust one, justice to him being more than equal freedom. Mr. Tucker is also opposed to the enforcement of the contract, but for a different reason. He admits that the contract is perfectly just, believing, with me, that all contracts made under equal freedom by sane people are necessarily just, because justice and equal liberty are synonymous terms; but he avoids the dilemma by saying that "there is no obligation upon outsiders to enforce any contract, even though it be just, and that, when individuals associate themselves for defensive purposes, they will decide at the start what classes of just contracts it is advisable to enforce."

Now, this does not really meet the difficulty. Of course men may agree to enforce something less than justice, just as they may agree to enforce something more than justice. It might be unwise, but it certainly would not be unjust, for a voluntary association to undertake to enforce, not only justice, but negative and positive beneficence as well. Similarly, it might be unwise, but it would not be wrong in principle, for a voluntary association to agree to ignore certain classes of harsh though just contracts. But suppose that an outsider, without waiting for the action of the association, goes ahead and succeeds in enforcing a contract against a member which the association, had it been applied to, would have declined to enforce. Mr. Tucker has declared (and very consistently) in his criticism of Mr. Schilling's objections to Liberty's "extreme deductions" that every man must be allowed to be his own sheriff and judge, and that the only question which arises when a man has "taken the law into his own hands" is whether he has acted justly or invasively. Now, it would be a contradiction in terms to say that the enforcement of a just contract is an invasion; hence a jury would have to decide that the outsider who had enforced a just contract was innocent of wrong-doing, and that he must be allowed to enjoy the fruits of his summary action. Mr. Tucker, therefore, who, as a member of a voluntary association, would vote against the enforcement of such contracts as that of the drowning man (who, indeed, would not join any association which did not except such contracts from its general rule of action), would, as a juror trying an outsider for enforcing a harsh contract, have to vote for an acquittal. So far, therefore, as Mr. Tucker's position is concerned, Mr. Salter's question simply needs to be slightly modified. Mr. Salter asks whether believers in equal freedom would enforce the drowning man's contract; he would ask Mr. Tucker if he would allow outsiders to enforce such a contract against members of his association. If the answer is "yes," then he enforces contracts which he declares to be repugnant to common sense and expediency; if he says "no," he squarely contradicts his own previous declaration.

For my own part, I would enforce any contract entered into under equal liberty by persons capable of contracting. Both as a juror and member of an association I would vote for the enforcement of all just contracts. In the case of the drowning man I held, and still hold, that it cannot reasonably be maintained that he was fit to make a contract. A man struggling in water and about to sink is not a rational and sane person, in my judgment. And I am glad to be able to say that a number of highly intelligent men to whom I submitted this question have expressed their complete approval of my "line of defence."

Still, it is to be borne in mind that, in making this point, I am simply raising a question of fact. I do not reject the principle, but merely ask to have the question of fitness and sanity determined in the ordinary way before proceeding to try the question whether a breach of a valid contract has taken place. As my friend, Mr. A. W. Wright (who, by the way, emphatically holds that the drowning man's agreement should be enforced), suggests, I am demanding two trials instead of one. If the question of fitness and sanity is decided against me, I have no objection to the enforcement of the drowning man's contract.

That it would be inexpedient to enforce such a contract, I am by no means ready to admit. Apart from my conviction that justice is necessarily and always expedient, it seems to me that there are many ways in which the act of the heartless rescuer could be disapproved and condemned without a trace of invasive interference. By a rigid boycott, for example, it is possible to render the enforcement of all harsh and unreasonable contracts utterly impossible. The very end which Mr. Tucker has in view can, therefore, be achieved without any violation of equal freedom and without making any exception of certain classes of just contracts. Society has a perfect right to say to the heartless rescuer: "Yes, we will enforce your contract, since a jury of experts (or ordinary intelligent citizens, perhaps) has found that the drowning man was sane and fit to make the contract you sue upon; but we shall certainly decline to associate or trade with you in view of your inhumanity."

I repeat, therefore, that I would enforce the drowning man's contract, provided it can be shown to the satisfaction of a jury that he was fit to make it,—or, in other words, that the contract was a real contract.

V. Y.

If I were to meet Mr. Yarros's criticism of my position as he has met my criticism of his, I should entirely neglect the grounds of his criticism, and simply declare that I still adhere to my own view, possibly adding that my view is shared by highly intelligent men of my acquaintance. But I prefer to leave that method of debate to Mr. Yarros. When my opponent offers me a difficulty, I cannot content myself with a reiteration of my belief, but must examine, analyze, and meet the considerations urged against me, or, if I cannot meet them fully, at the very least acknowledge the existence of the difficulty.

So I say at once to Mr. Yarros that the difficulty which he offers me is a very real one,—one, indeed, that I duly appreciated before he offered it. To forcibly prevent the rescuer from compelling the rescued to fulfil the contract into which he had voluntarily entered would unquestionably be a violation of equal liberty,—an invasion. But this is simply one phase, one appearance, of a very general difficulty that besets the entire doctrine of Anarchism, or equal liberty, and I have often wondered at the failure of the Archists to advance it and insist upon it. When Mr. Yarros, however, himself an Anarchist, advances it, and asks me to surmount it or succumb to it, I have to remind him that it is one which must plague him no less than myself, and that it is incumbent on him to surmount it or, at least, join me in an effort to do so. Mr. Yarros agrees with me that the right to combine for defence is founded on and measured by the individual right of self-defence, and that equal liberty entitles any individual to fall back upon his original right to be his own sheriff and judge. Now, if an individual, in the exercise of this right, sentences to death, or to life imprisonment, a man who has stolen from him a loaf of bread, what does Mr. Yarros, who, we will suppose, belongs to a defensive association of which this thief is also a member, propose to do about it? Will he and his fellow-members allow the man who has been robbed to impose, in the exercise of his undoubted right of self-defence, so severe a penalty upon their erring associate for an offence of no greater gravity than the one supposed? I cannot think that he will say "yes" to this question; and yet, if he says "no," he will as clearly violate the doctrine that each individual may be his own sheriff and judge as would I were I to prevent the rescuer of the drowning man from compelling the rescued to fulfil his contract. There is nothing intrinsic in the apportionment of penalty for offence; it is simply a question of what is necessary in order to prevent further offence; and, if the offended is to be allowed to be his own sheriff and judge, he must be allowed, as one of his judicial functions, to decide the extent of this necessity. If A may decide by what methods B may defend himself, then the rights of A and B to defend themselves are not equal. But the doctrine of equal rights of self-defence is cardinal in Anarchism. Mr. Yarros will perceive, I think, that the difficulty is not mine alone, but his as well.

However, while acknowledging the reality of this difficulty which we may encounter in the application of the Anarchistic idea, I cannot consider it of enough importance to compel the abandonment of Anarchism, or equal liberty, in favor of Archism, or authority, as a foundation of social life. The blessings of the former are so great and the evils of the latter so enormous that we must put up with any imperfections in the realization of our ideal which exceptional circumstances may force upon us. And so I meet the difficulty in question by falling back upon that good old rule which with me is prior to all other rules: "When an emergency arises, cave in the emergency's head." I think that the two hypothetical situations here involved, being very unusual and almost impossible, are clearly examples of emergency. Either of them is more extreme and unlikely than the situation which I pictured to Mr. Yarros in our previous controversy as to whether equal freedom is an absolute law, and regarding which he has remained to this day conspicuously silent. Therefore, in accordance with my position that there are cases in the experience of individuals and associations when it is advisable and necessary to frankly override the very rule of behavior upon which ordinarily we find it to our advantage to insist, I declare that I, as a member of a defensive association, would not allow my fellow-member to be imprisoned for life or put to death for stealing a loaf of bread, or to be stripped of his entire property in enforcement of his promise to part with it on condition of being saved from drowning.

Of course Mr. Yarros will be unable to accept this disposition of the matter, as long as his "evolutionary ethics" compel him to hold that justice is necessarily and always expedient. But on that question I have already driven him to the wall. I criticised his conception of equal freedom as a law; he answered my criticism; I rejoined at greater length and more positively than ever, giving new illustrations not open to the exceptions which he had taken to my previous ones; and since then, though many months have elapsed, no word has been heard from him. I can account for his silence only on the ground that he could find no answer to me. Certainly, if he has a satisfactory

answer, it is of some importance to make it known, because a change in my view of this matter would modify Liberty's teachings considerably.

This position that justice and its enforcement are always expedient will lead Mr. Yarros to some queer conclusions. He declares that as a member of an association he would vote for the enforcement of all just contracts. This means that he would not join an association discriminating between different classes of just contracts, but would join only such an association as should be formed to enforce any just contract whatever upon the demand of a party thereto who was at the same time a member of the association. Now, suppose it should be discovered, as many "highly intelligent" men claim that it has already been discovered,—a point upon which I utter no opinion here,—that debts are more uniformly and promptly paid in a community where no attempt is ever made to enforce the payment of debt. In that case Mr. Yarros and his association would be compelled by their principle to collect a debt on demand of a debtor, in the very teeth of the fact that this enforced collection must defeat its own ulterior purpose by leading to a greater disregard of debts than there would otherwise be. They would be compelled to continue to punish murderers, even though it should be demonstrated that such punishment increases the number of murders. This is resistance on principle,—the reverse of Tolstoism, and even more absurd than Tolstoism, which is non-resistance on principle. The position that the enforcement of justice is always expedient compels those who hold it to utterly ignore the indisputable fact that resistance, though generally wise, is sometimes unwise.

Now to come back to the drowning man. Mr. Yarros says that a drowning man is not a sane person. But he had said this before, and by repetition he gains nothing except time. There is no argument in the assertion, and in nothing that he now says is there any attention to my argument regarding the question of sanity. I pointed out that the sanity of the drowning man must be judged by his act, and I virtually asked Mr. Yarros if he considers it a sane act to drown rather than promise to give up one's property. Not daring to answer that question, he resorts to that reiteration which is excusable only in a man blind and deaf. And this simply to avoid the unqualified utterance of those unpleasant words with which his squarer friend, Mr. A. W. Wright, faces the music: "I would enforce the drowning man's contract." True, by these words Mr. Wright shows himself to be a man with justice on the brain, a man who would do justice though the heavens fall,—a man morality-crazed instead of religion-crazed, and every bit as much a spook-worshipper as the uncompromising, unflinching, and crazy Abraham himself. But at least he is not afraid either of man or of logic. Like Abraham, he is afraid only of his god. Yet, after all, that's the worst cowardice, and Mr. Yarros, rather than Mr. Wright, shines by the comparison. It is a little to Mr. Yarros's credit that he seeks an excuse to avoid obeying his god.

But, feeling that the excuse will be of no avail, and that this stern deity will exact obedience from its stern devotees, he tries to comfort himself with the reflection that the boycott will give him his revenge. After helping the brute to accomplish his brutality, he will boycott him! Surely nothing could more discredit a boycott than to employ it against a man for doing a thing which you have lent him your good right arm to do. The heartless rescuer would turn upon Mr. Yarros and say: "We are all in the same boat in this matter; we have been fellow-Shylocks to the rescued man; you joined with me to exact the pound of flesh; and now, if you boycott me, you yourself will become an object of contempt in the eyes of every man who *loves* justice instead of worshipping it." And before this cold blast of truth Mr. Yarros would slink away in shame.

O Evolutionary Ethics! O Almighty and Absolute Morality! wilt Thou not shrivel Thy shame-faced disciple? Canst Thou endure a follower that falters in his admiration of Thy perfect work? Shalt not this doubting doer of Thy will burn in Thy hell forever? We ask it in the name and for the sake of Herbert Spencer, Thy Beloved Son, who came on earth to save—drowning men for a consideration. Amen! T.

No Reason to Apologize.

Shortly after the appearance of the last issue of Liberty, in which I had accused John Most of putting into my mouth, by mistranslation, words exactly the opposite of those that I had used, I received communications from Mr. Rudolf Weyler and Dr. J. H. Maryson in which it was stated very positively and somewhat triumphantly that the German word in dispute, "Einhaltung," means stopping, checking, terminating, rather than sustaining, and that therefore Most had translated me correctly. Neither Mr. Weyler or Dr. Maryson are Germans, but I knew that Mr. Weyler at least had made a special study of languages, and so, despite my confidence in the German friend upon whom I had relied (a well educated man and practised writer of German), the positive statements of these gentlemen threw me into something of a panic. Wishing to inform Most, before he should answer me, of my intention to treat him honorably, I immediately wrote to him that I had been told that I was in error, and assured him that, if further investigation should prove this to be the case, I would promptly make him the most humble apology that my pen could frame. This done, I called upon my German friend, whose stout adherence to his own translation served to reassure me. Meantime came a third letter, from no less a linguist than Mr. Byington, telling me that Most would have the laugh on me. So, to finally settle the matter, I awaited the verdict of Mr. George Schumm, of whom, as a German and a master of both the German and the English languages, I had asked a decision. Mr. Schumm's letter, which came in due time, sustained my German friend completely, as the following extract shows:

> Your correspondents are utterly wrong, and you have no apologies to make to Most. ———'s rendering is correct, and I am sure Most himself will admit it to be so. The verb "einhalten" means "to stop," it is true: but it also means, according to Flügel's large dictionary, "to observe, follow, continue, adhere to, preserve, to act in pursuance of (a line of policy, &c.), to keep, adhere *or* stick to . . . to fulfil (a promise, &c.) punctually, to be true to (one's word);" and "Einhaltung, (w) *f.* the (act of) keeping in, &c., observance (of), adherence (to)." The same meaning of these words is also given by my Preusse-Thieme and the large Sanders. I trust this will set you at ease.

On the strength of this I hold the ground taken in my article in the last number, and renew my charge against Most. As yet, he has made no answer in "Freiheit," save to say in his *Briefkasten*, apparently in answer to my letter, "All right and thank you." This seems to indicate a willingness on his part to grasp at the straw which my correspondents have held out to him. But it will not save him, as Mr. Schumm clearly shows.

Nothing in the foregoing should be construed as a reflection upon the scholarship of Messrs. Maryson, Weyler, and Byington. The very best of scholars are liable to an occasional blunder in the interpretation of a foreign tongue, especially over a rarely-used word like "Einhaltung," not to be found in German-English dictionaries. But German is Most's native tongue, and I have always been told that he handles it well. For him, then, there is no excuse. T.

The present issue of Liberty being unavoidably late, it is dated August 1 instead of July 25. The next issue will appear August 22, and bear that date.

Candidate Bryan, in his effective and clever speech at the Chicago convention, adverting to the demand of some eastern Democrats that the greenbacks shall be retired and the government gradually withdrawn from the banking business, said that the true Jeffersonian doctrine was that the issue of money is a function of sovereignty, and that it is as wrong for the government to allow private parties to furnish a medium of exchange to the people as it would be to allow them to furnish private police protection and a private judiciary. The government, he said, is not engaged in the bankers' business; it is the bankers who are in the government's business, and it is they who should be retired from the currency-issuing business. Now, whatever Jefferson may have thought or said on this particular point, his general philosophy is diametrically opposite to that of Mr. Bryan. He believed in a minimum of government, and was virtually an Anarchist. Mr. Bryan, on the other hand, is a Populist and fiatist. He believes in enlarging the functions of government and is in favor of authority in every respect save one,—international trade. He advocated free trade when he was a congressman, and probably still believes in it. The Democratic convention may have been the first sign of a great popular uprising, but, if the people are misguided and headed in the wrong direction. no true friend of right and justice can congratulate himself upon the revolt. "It does one's heart good," says Governor Altgeld, "to hear the echo of the people's voice thundering for their rights." Assuredly; but suppose they mistake wrongs for rights, shadows for substances, error for truth? Does it do one's heart good to witness popular delusions?

There are several good planks in the Democratic platform, and rumor credits Altgeld with securing their insertion. One is against

"government by injunction," or the usurpation of the judiciary in punishing, without jury trial, persons accused of violating the criminal laws of the United States. Another is against presidential usurpation and invasion of "State rights." Altgeld's position on the question of the right to order federal troops into a community without the request and against the express wishes of the local authorities in cases of civil strife is fully endorsed. It is also significant that the immigration plank limits itself to opposing the admission of paupers, and does not favor (as the Republican platform does) the application of an "educational test" to all immigrants. Still, the pretence of some semi-individualist reformers that the platform is progressive on the whole is too absurd for comment. How anybody who believes in free banking or mutual banking can approve of a platform which declares that all money must be issued by the government direct to the people, and that banks must be absolutely deprived of the power to utter circulating notes, passes comprehension.

What will the Single Taxers do in this campaign. Four years ago a majority of them worked and voted for the Populists for fiat money, sub-treasuries, government railroads, and what not, while the minority supported Cleveland on account of his alleged tariff-reform proclivities. The Populistic Single Taxers can again join the Populists, but those who made common cause with the Democracy find themselves in a state of political isolation. Will they stay at home on election day, or has the voting habit become second nature with them, so that non-participation in the contest is out of the question? If they were consistent, they would form a new political party. All hope of impressing the farmers with the beauties of the Single Tax *and* free trade is gone for the present, and the Democratic party is committed to a revenue tariff. Single Tax and a revenue tariff are even more incompatible than Single Tax and a prohibitive protective tariff yielding no revenue at all.

The Municipal Wash-Tub.

[Newcastle Chronicle.]

There has, during the past five years, been a total falling off in the number of persons using the baths and wash houses of 50,325. Yet the expenditure on these costly and, as the statistics demonstrate, unnecessary institutions has risen by over £500. Salaries which in the March of 1890 stood at £1,677 reached in the March of 1895 a total of £2,039; while the cost of gas, coal, and water simultaneously increased from £1,571 to £1,937. This brilliant achievement is the more surprising, or, rather, would be if its authors were not a Corporation [by Corporation is here meant the municipal body politic.—EDITOR LIBERTY.], seeing that during the period referred to the tendency of nearly every commodity, labor included, has been to depreciate. Individual citizens with fixed incomes have been benefited by this general cheapening. But the community as a whole, as represented by the council, have somehow or other lost by it, until at length they are actually invited to submit to an additional impost of threepence in the pound to supply a deficiency arising from an estate which, if properly managed, ought to render us one of the lightest-rated boroughs in the kingdom. It was argued during last week's debate that this sacrifice had been incurred "to keep folks clean." "To keep folks clean" by a method involving an expenditure which increases at a ratio inversely proportionate to the number of persons cleansed would be a poor performance, even if credit for it could fairly be claimed. If in 1896 the cost of keeping 50,000 fewer folks clean was £500 in excess of that in 1890, we should like to be told what would be the expense of keeping two or three people clean municipally. The notion, however, that the municipalization of baths and wash-houses has contributed to popular cleanliness is a pure fallacy,—honestly entertained, we do not doubt, but none the less a fallacy on that account. We are prepared to contend that the effect of the step in question has been exactly the opposite. The truth is that, if, as we are disposed to believe, the community is cleaner than it used to be, the circumstance is due, not to the municipal universal provider, but to the much-abused owner of house-property. It is he, the individual owner, who, impelled partly by the stress of competition, and partly by the demand of every Englishman for his morning tub, has placed the bath where it is wanted,—outside the bedroom door of every decent dwelling. It is difficult to find a modern working-class house which is not furnished with a bath. Does any sane person doubt that it has been the chief instrument in washing our masters? And does any sane person suppose that it would have been put there if the provision of workmen's dwellings had been left to municipalities instead of to private enterprise? What inducement has a Corporation to study the wants of the community? How can it be influenced by competition?

If the loss entailed over the baths and wash-houses in Newcastle were an isolated example of the failure of an experiment in municipalization, it would not be worth enlarging upon. But it is not. It is a fair sample of what must inevitably happen when public bodies, departing from their legitimate functions, undertake to conduct private businesses. Hundreds and thousands of illustrations of the same kind could be given; and, on the other hand, the admirers of Socialism-and-water may safely be defied to point to a single instance in which municipalizing experiments have been successful over any length of time. They have been the ruin of many communities in France and Italy: they will be the ruin of many more; and they threaten to be the ruin of several in this country. Unfortunately, however, the lessons of experience are thrown away upon the municipalizer. When his fine schemes end in disaster, his only remedy is persistence in the evil course. Rarely, indeed, can he be persuaded to abandon it. Some years ago, to select a minor local case at haphazard, the Newcastle Corporation, which had been giving concerts in a small way, decided—most unjustly, since several principal ratepayers were themselves purveyors of music—to give concerts on the grand scale, the reason being that the small entertainments had been a failure. Thus were established the People's Concerts. They have at last involved a loss; and the committee propose to make it good by giving more of them next season. The Cattle Sanatorium, the Fish Quay, and the Markets are huge white elephants too familiar to need description. While the Corporation are paying £40 a yard for ground at the foot of Westgate road and in Blackett street, and while sites in less eligible parts of the city have recently been valued at as much as £60 a yard, the shops and stalls in the markets, standing in the most central and most valuable portion of the borough, let at nominal rents. The squalor of the place is a disgrace to the metropolis of the north; and land worth at a far too moderate computation over a quarter of a million in sterling returns about £2,000 per annum. This is how we are to be spared all rates and taxes by the blessed process of municipalization and nationalization. A correspondent whose letter we publish this morning urges that these results afford proof, not of the futility of municipalization as a system, but of the incompetence of the Newcastle Corporation. Our reply is that all Corporations are incompetent to manage private businesses, and that the Newcastle Corporation is not worse, but rather better, than most local governing bodies which essay the task. We are asked to look at Glasgow and see what has been accomplished there in the two years during which the council has had control of the tramways. But what deduction can be drawn from so short a period, and what guarantee have we that the excellent management assumed to exist now will be continued in the future? The Glasgow Corporation may at the present moment be composed of men specially qualified to work the tramways with satisfaction to their users and with profit to the community. But exactly because they possess those qualifications the councillors may be turned out at the next election, and the affair be handed over to a parcel of incompetent demagogues. If it is true that up till now the Glasgow municipalized tramways have been worked at a profit, that is no proof that in private hands they would not have been more economically and beneficially worked. Nor does it dispose of the fact that at Huddersfield the municipalization of the tramway has necessitated the imposition of a rate of fivepence in the pound; that in many boroughs, including the model Glasgow, the municipalization of the gas-supply resulted in a loss to the ratepayers; and that during the drought of 1893 the towns worst off for water were those in which the water-works have been acquired by the local authorities. Our correspondent reminds us of the danger of prophesying in this connection. We agree with him that, as a rule, vaticination is a risky proceeding. But it is always safe to predict that, when the State or the municipality undertakes to acquire a private enterprise and work it for the public advantage, it will, sooner or later, make a mess of it.

It is to be observed, furthermore, that the injury directly inflicted by the failure of these experiments is often trivial in comparison with the injuries which the community indirectly sustains. Just as an individual who devotes himself to other people's business necessarily neglects his own, so a Corporation which assumes illegitimate functions necessarily fails to discharge the duties with which it has rightfully been entrusted. It cannot attend to everything. For months past the Newcastle council has been wrangling over the tramways question,—a matter about which it ought really not to concern itself,—and, meanwhile, scarlet fever and diphtheria have been rampant in the Arthur's Hill district. Yesterday the sanitary committee received a report stating that, out of 200 drains examined in the affected quarter, 130 had been found to be defective. These drains, it must be remembered, are drains of the Corporation's own approving. Suppose that the council had been attending to its own duties as the sanitary authority, instead of endeavoring to establish itself as an omnibus proprietor, is it not probable that the faulty drains would never have been sanctioned, or would have been detected sooner, and that much death and misery would thus have been prevented? To add to the work of a Corporation by compelling or permitting it to become a proprietor of tramways and omnibuses, a musical *entrepreneur*, a purveyor of electricity, and the like, is inevitably to secure that its vitally important duties shall be ill performed. The correspondent to whose communication we have already alluded contends that tramways, electricity, and baths are necessities, and, therefore, ought to be supplied by the municipality. But surely food and clothing are greater necessities; and, if it is desirable that tramways should be municipalized, the transfer of the butchers', bakers', and clothiers' shops to the town council must be a step even more urgently demanded in the interests of the community. We fancy few people outside Bedlam and the Fabian society are prepared for such a measure. Yet it is the logical development of the municipalizing schemes now advocated by men who would scorn the title of Socialist; and they should bear in mind that, having set the fashion, they cannot check it just when and how they please. Another thing to be remembered is that, in the long run, the cost of these calamitous ventures must fall upon those least able to bear it,—namely, upon the wage-earners. The workman who conceives that municipalization is a short cut to a redistribution of wealth in his favor labors under a fatal delusion. At best, and assuming its success, municipalization could only mean that some of his income would be spent for him instead of by him. In other words, he would be deprived of the freedom to dispose of the whole of his earnings as he may think fit. But, the failure of the scheme being assured in advance, the consequences to him are more serious. He must be injured in one or more of three ways. Either the cost of the necessaries of existence will be enhanced, or his wages will be reduced, or, worse still, he will be deprived of his employment. Experience is worthless if it does not prove that experiments in municipal Socialism raise the rates; and to a very large extent the rates are paid by the workman, directly or indirectly.

To Humanity.

When heavenly music plays,
My sweetest dream art thou,
Humanity!
When joy my grief allays,
To serve but thee I vow,
Humanity!
When all my hope decays,
With hope for thee I glow,
Humanity!
In these decadent days
Why do I love thee so,
Humanity?

Basil Dahl.

"The Municipal Theatre Absurdity."

My dear Tucker:

In your issue of May 2 you permit Mr. Victor Yarros to lecture me on this subject, without contributing anything to it, my offence being, as far as I can gather, that I am a master of logic and consistency, instead of, like Mr. Yarros, a slave to them. Allow me to make a few random observations on his homily.

"Mr. Shaw," says Mr. Yarros, "ought to advocate municipal religion, municipal newspapers and magazines, and municipal books on philosophy, economics, and politics." Well, *I do.* I have been in more churches in Italy than in any other country; and the only really well-kept and well-staffed and properly-run church I found there is a municipal church. Our municipal gazettes and other publications supply a want which private enterprise does not supply. Our municipal lectures on philosophy, economics, and politics seem to me to be quite as useful as those of any private corporation.

"Again, how nonsensical it is for Mr. Shaw to talk about private enterprise begging to be protected from the competition of public enterprise! *Nothing of the sort has ever occurred.*" My dear Tucker, how old is this Mr. Yarros? Where was he born? Where does he live? Is he allowed to read the papers? "Nothing of the sort has ever occurred"! Why, nothing else ever does occur when the question is raised. Let me give you the smallest instance I know. Our State department of education has arranged, at the South Kensington Museum, to procure for any person who wants them the photographs of the masterpieces of Italian art published by Alinari of Florence for the use of art students. If you go to the Museum, you can inspect these photographs for nothing. If you wish to buy any, you put down the numbers on a foreign post-card. You then hand over to the State official a penny for the post-card and sixpence apiece for the photographs (less than the private enterprise rate). You go home, and in a few days your photographs are delivered at your house by the State postman. Private enterprise does not provide you with this accommodation; but private enterprise complains so fiercely of photographs being sold by anybody but itself that the Museum authorities positively dare not even exhibit a placard in the Museum to explain the arrangement to the public. I give this trivial instance because the bi[illegible]nstances are notorious, gross, palpable to all the world. A vestry cannot undertake the electric lighting of the parish; a municipal corporation cannot propose to run a tramcar without the intervention of a private joint-stock company; a school board cannot open a new school; the central government cannot suggest State railways or build a breakwater in a harbor,—that private enterprise does not claim a monopoly of industry, and shriek for protection against the competition of public enterprise.

"Public enterprise," says Mr. Yarros, "rests on compulsory taxation, and never competes on an equal footing with private enterprise in a fair and free field." I should think not. It is the very essence of competition that the latest competitor should enter on the strength of some advantage which the others lack, and that the enterprise with most advantages should win. Private enterprise itself is always crying for protection—State protection—against competition, on Mr. Yarros's ground that advantages are "unfair." The London shopkeeper agitates for the moving on by the police of the costermonger on the ground that a shop has to pay rent whilst the coster's barrow goes rent-free. Mr. Yarros, like the shopkeeper, is in favor of the survival of the fittest only on condition that the competitors are handicapped until all are equally fit,—that is, when it can produce no effect whatever. But how would he set about handicapping the State? He will say that the municipality must not compete against private enterprise with capital raised by compulsory taxation; the taxation must be voluntary. But, pray, how does private enterprise raise its capital? Is it voluntarily subscribed by the men and women whose labor produces it? Not a bit of it. Some of it will be collected in the first instance as rent from the workers whose labor has earned it, the collection being made compulsory by the State, which enforces the proprietary right of the landlord to his rent by exactly the same means as it enforces the demands of the tax collector. Some of it will never reach the workers at all, but will be withdrawn as rent of capital from the pile paid by the public for the goods or services of a trading company before any worker, from the manager to the porter, receives a penny. And this subtraction is also made compulsory by State force. Here we have a much worse compulsion than the compulsion to pay taxes; for the proprietors of land and capital compel the workers to pay them rent and interest with the avowed intention of spending it on themselves just as they please, whereas even Tammany is supposed to give the public value for every farthing of the rates, and, as a matter of fact, does and must give good value for a large percentage of it, in order to be allowed to job and steal and malversate the balance. Further, the average man, for whose sake alone private enterprise or any other enterprise can claim political recognition, controls it, not as a promoter or director, or even through a shareholder's vote at an annual meeting, but solely as a customer. In dealing with his municipality, he is better off, because he has his vote as well as his power of withholding and transferring his custom. In cases where he cannot transfer his custom owing to the municipality or some powerful capitalist combination having beaten all competition out of the field, he can fall back on his vote in the case of municipal enterprise; whilst in the case of private enterprise he is quite powerless.

Private enterprise, then, even more than public enterprise, is conducted with forcibly levied capital, the force being submitted to because, as I have shown in my "Impossibilities of Anarchism," it is an inevitable condition of private property, and private property seems to the majority—and therefore for the present *is*—an inevitable condition of social order. However, as most Anarchists are persons with a constitutional disability for comprehending the phenomenon known as economic rent, Mr. Yarros, being an Anarchist, will perhaps not understand this point. Let me, then, accept the capitalist shareholder, for the sake of argument, as a person who has earned his money in the sweat of his brow, as he, of course, sometimes actually is. What sort of freedom has he? He can choose what company to invest in; but so can a citizen choose what town he shall live in—for instance, if New York starts a municipal theatre, he can go to Chicago. If all America takes to municipal Socialism, he can become a Pilgrim Father and go to Australia, or England. Mr. Yarros, if he were really a free-minded man, would here explode the controversy by telling me to stop talking nonsense,—that a man is not free to transplant himself in that manner the moment he cannot have everything his own way. Precisely; but does Mr. Yarros contend that the private capitalist's freedom to transplant his money comes to much more? If he wants a railway, he must combine with other capitalists to make one, and be subject to the majority of their votes as helplessly as a London citizen is subject to the votes of the majority of his fellow-citizens. Indeed, this overstates his freedom, for, unless he is a capable organizer and promoter, he cannot form combinations; he can only buy his way into combinations already formed, and submit himself to the wisdom of the directors. It is true that, if he is dissatisfied, he can sell out. But in practice this is only the Pilgrim Father alternative over again. He might as well try to escape from the municipal theatre by moving into the next street. His power of shifting his capital about from one point in the cash nexus of modern commerce to another—that is, of withdrawing his support from one set of directors and giving it to another—makes him not a whit freer than the ratepayer who can transfer his vote from one party to another. He may, of course, be more powerful socially than an average ratepayer, if he happens to be richer; but I take it that Mr. Yarros is not defending his privileges, but his rights.

If Mr. Yarros will now proceed, as I have invited him, to handicap the municipality so as to produce what he calls competition on an equal footing with private enterprise, he will find that neither in respect of majority rule, compulsory levy of capital, popular control of it, or freedom of choice as between one employment of it and another need he make any readjustments, except in favor of public enterprise. Public capital has one privilege, and one only, which is denied to private capital. It cannot legally be gambled away, or deliberately and riotously wasted. Private capital legally can.

Now, let us talk a little common sense. I am by profession a critic of the fine arts and a dramatist; and I know, both from the artistic and the business point of view, what private theatrical enterprise can and will do in England at present, and what it cannot and will not. In that character I have pointed out that, among other things that happen every day, an English municipality or vestry will let the town hall for a night, or three nights, or seven nights, to the manager of a travelling theatrical company. The manager brings his own actors, and his own scenery and properties,—perhaps his own "fit up" or temporary stage. The municipality may provide attendants and check-takers, just as they supply the hall and the light, on inclusive terms; or he may provide them himself, as the case may be. He brings his musical conductor, but probably hires local musicians to form the band. If the town hall has an organ, and he wants the use of it, that can be included in the bargain too. Now, suppose a municipality were to find it profitable to keep a band and a stage for the use of managers as well as an organ and an orchestral platform for the use of concert-givers. Suppose they used the band, when it would otherwise be "eating its head off," to give concerts of the great treasures of orchestral music that private enterprise has never yet brought to the ears of many of our Philistine country towns. Suppose they reinforce their staff of attendants and cleaners with a staff of dressers, then of stage-carpenters, finally with a staff of actors, who could occasionally give a Shaksperean performance parallel to the concerts. Suppose the money paid by the individuals who attended the performances (voluntarily) were sufficient not only to defray the expenses of the municipal theatre, but to lighten the rates of the people who never go to the theatre, and who might perhaps return the compliment by supporting municipal chapels and churches. Suppose the municipal theatre hurt nobody; suppose it made theatrical art, now strangled by its mere business difficulties, easier; suppose it helped to turn the provincial Englishman from the fat-fed, respectably-dressed, circulating-library-stuffed, earless, eyeless, tasteless, mannerless boor he now is into a cultivated human being,—and it is on the reasonable probability of these conditions being practically attained, more or less, that I have based my advocacy of municipal activity in this direction,—what objection has Mr. Yarros to offer?

He has a good many. First, that "the daily life of nations abounds in illustrations of political stupidity, corruption, ignorance, jingoism, and idiocy." This being an objection to any course of action whatever except general suicide and Keeley-etherization of the globe, I pass it by as equally fatal to public and private enterprise. Second, that the municipal theatre would not be kept up to the mark by competition. I reply, why not? A private manager can open a theatre of his own next door to the town hall as easily as he can start one next door to Sir Henry Irving. The public can stay away, go elsewhere, bring upon the municipal theatre a deficit which cannot be bluffed and concealed for the purpose of humbugging the people in the next town into rushing to see a bogus "success" on tour (an inevitable feature of private theatrical enterprise),—in short, can control the municipal theatre much more effectively than the private one. If Mr. Yarros will study my preface to Mr. William Archer's "Theatrical World of 1895" (published by Walter Scott, London), he will there find an elabor-

ate demonstration, which I cannot repeat here for lack of space, that the theatrical manager is not an ordinary man of business following the scent of a market demand, and that no sane capitalist will put a farthing of capital into a good theatre on purely commercial grounds. Third, Mr. Yarros says that "everybody is to be compelled to contribute because Mr. Shaw and his majority want to be amused in a certain way." Well, why not? Everybody is compelled to contribute because Mr. Shaw and his majority want to have the streets lighted and paved. Mr. Yarros, as an Anarchist, protests against this. I smile, and, with the friendly remark that the arrangement is convenient, even for Mr. Yarros, pass on to the practical point that I do not propose that anybody shall contribute to the municipal theatre except the people who voluntarily attend its performances. If it does not pay commercially, it can be shut up like a private theatre, unless the majority of the ratepayers think that the social effect of their theatre is worth a subsidy, as a museum or picture gallery is. In that case they can subsidize it at a very trifling annual cost to a great number of people, whereas an insolvent private theatre, however valuable artistically, has to look for a rich "backer" whose interest in his whim seldom lasts long, even if his motives are public ones, which they often are not. As to the notion that my own tastes in drama are those of the majority, Mr. Yarros flatters the majority grossly; but let that pass. Then Mr. Yarros speaks sarcastically of my reference to "the votes of the respectable public," and twits me with losing my sense of humor. But it is not sense of humor, but sense of fact, that is important in a practical proposal. When the modern jingo, quoting Falconbridge in "King John" says: "Come the four corners of the world in arms, and we shall shock them," he is talking buncombe; but that does not mean that England has no power at all: it only means that jingoes overstate her power in a foolish way. It is an ascertained fact in London that, owing to "the votes of the respectable public," acting upon the London county council, which can withdraw the license of a music hall, but does not license theatres, the music halls are decenter than the theatres which cater for the same class of audience. When you go to a "musical farce" at a theatre, the leading low comedian, a person of such consequence that the manager dare not remonstrate with him, disgusts the majority of the audience by blackguardly schoolboy jests, which they have to put up with for the sake of the amusement given them by the rest of his performance. In the music halls the manager warns the performer that, if he does such a thing, he will forfeit his engagement instantly; and the performer, however popular at the halls, must submit, because all the other music-hall managers are under the same compulsion to restrain him, whereas at the theatre he can retort by threatening to take himself and his popularity and his wilful sallies of blackguardism to some rival house where the manager is less squeamish. Here you have a certain effect produced by a certain force. I do not set up that force as an idol: I am too acutely aware that it would, if it could, probably hang both Mr. Yarros and myself for our opinion of its "political stupidity, ignorance, jingoism, and idiocy." I simply take note of what it can do and has done, and count upon it to that extent and no more. I shall not try to raise a laugh at Mr. Yarros's advocacy of "the great anti-vice factor, competition, which compels men to be alert, industrious, ingenious, and more or less honest." Let him emulate my magnanimity, and allow me also to give the devil his due.

But Mr. Yarros's one really heartfelt objection is that, if we municipalize the theatre, we shall be bound, in consistency, to municipalize everything else. "Mr. Shaw's question," he says, "is simply childish. What he really means is that, since, as a Fabian Socialist, he intends to abolish *all* private enterprise, and put the State in control of *every* important industry, institution, and interest, he naturally looks forward to the nationalization of the stage as part of the great scheme." Let me here tell Mr. Yarros that what he calls consistency and logic is nothing in the world but irrational association of ideas. According to his conception of consistency, it is inconsistent to clothe your head with felt and your feet with leather, or to employ a dentist to extract your teeth and a barber to cut off your beard. Consistency, in short, means an insane determination to do everything in exactly the same way. Hence we have Mr. Yarros's notion that, because I want the municipality to take up the business of giving theatrical entertainments, I am bound to want them to take up all other businesses as well. Also, it appears, that they should compel every citizen to attend their performances, whether he likes or not, and that they should forcibly prevent any private person from organizing and giving such performances. Let Mr. Yarros reassure himself by taking the world really instead of logically. Neither Socialism or Anarchism, public enterprise or private enterprise, are of universal application; and the Fabian Society has from the very first expressly placed to its proposal for the collectivist administration of capital the common-sense limit of social convenience. Mr. Yarros may not be able to understand how a Fabian Socialist can, without sacrificing his intellectual integrity, be willing to excavate his egg at breakfast with his own silver spoon, and yet have the foundations of his house excavated with a municipal steam navvy; but I can assure him that the Fabian Socialist is quite capable of that "inconsistency," and many others as well.

Do you not think, my dear Tucker, that what you want is a few Fabian Anarchists? In the Fabian Society here in London we have a saying that a man is no good to us until he has got over his Socialism. I suggest that Mr. Yarros's value will be doubled when he celebrates his coming of age as a social philosopher by getting over his Anarchism. There is no such thing in the world as a panacea; and, whether you call it the Philosopher's stone, or the Elixir of Life, or Holloway's Pills, or something with an "ism" at the end of it,—Socialism, Anarchism, Positivism, or what you please,—it is always a vulgar illusion, a thought fathered by the wish to simplify the labor of picking the locks of a million problems by finding one master key for them all. I suggest to Mr. Yarros that the great secret is that there is no great secret, and that, if he wishes to lock the door of the municipal theatre in my face, he must do it with the key of that door, and not with a key constructed on Anarchist principles to fit any door. I suggest to him further that, although he happens—like you and myself—to be one of those people who prefer happiness and liberty to comfort and security, he is placed thereby in an exceedingly small minority, and would make the world unbearably unhappy for the mass of his fellow-creatures, if he arranged it to suit a population of Yarroses and Tuckers and Shaws. Even I must confess that I have had much more liberty and opportunity for happiness than I have cared or been able to make use of; and, if you and Mr. Yarros tell me that this has not been your experience, I shall not believe you. We are not the champions of the oppressed masses: we are their tyrants, trying to force on them opportunities which they don't want, and proposing what they hate above all things—a serious interference with their habits. The poor devils may not, it seems, even treat themselves to a performance of "The Merchant of Venice" in their own town hall because "everybody who appreciates and loves liberty [that is, half a dozen cranks like Mr. Yarros, you, and I] must be opposed to the absurd scheme." Is it any wonder that the world makes a compliment of not hanging us?

Finally, is there anything to prevent Liberty being the best organ of social criticism in the United States except its abject slavery to its confounded principles? I admire the masterly manner in which you dodge them by opening your pages freely to unprincipled persons, and by shocking Mr. Yarros ten or eleven times in every issue by your own heresies; but would it not be better to throw the principles overboard altogether and have done with them? The mere scandal of it would be refreshing; and Liberty would be free at last.

Ever yours,
G. Bernard Shaw.

'Tis Ever Thus.

[Washington Star.]

"Mamma, what does 'pro and con' mean?"

"Two things opposed to each other, my child."

"Oh, that's where the words 'progress' and 'congress' come from, isn't it?"

Is Justification Necessary?

[International Art Printer.]

Much space is being taken up nowadays by many journals with discussion and argument over the question of whether it is necessary and advisable to justify the words of a line of type so as to form all lines flush at both ends to a given measure. The discussion is being led by the "Home Journal" of New York and "Paper and Press" of Philadelphia. The "Home Journal" is most persistent in its advocacy of the non-justifying theory, while "Paper and Press" is equally persistent in its championship of justifying as now in universal practice.

Each may have good arguments to bring to the substantiation of its claim. And, like the present-day pugilists, might go on using space unlimited for time ditto, and in the end the printers would be no nearer a practical solution of the question.

After giving the matter careful consideration, we have decided to devote the pages of the "International Art Printer" to a practical illustration of the subject. Now, we are very well aware of the dangers to be encountered in such a proceeding—the criticisms and perhaps abuse that are bound to result. The criticisms are what we are after; the abuse we care nothing about.

As to the merits of the case, we do not care to attempt to decide, at present. I cannot say that I am greatly struck with the appearance of pages of matter set in this style. But that is only an opinion, and we don't pretend that our opinions are any less open to question than any others.

To come to our object, however. It is to offer a medium for a fair, impartial, and practical illustrating of the practicability or impracticability of setting straight matter, in book or news work, without justification. To this end, commencing with next issue, all the text of the "International Art Printer" will be set without justification, as is this article. We confess we are as much at sea as to the result of the experiment as any of our readers are. At the same time we are just as anxious for the experiment as any can be. We would suggest that all should follow the course we have laid down for ourselves in reaching a decision. We think it will hardly be fair to jump to the conclusion, after seeing the new style but once, that it is not as artistic as the present justifying; that it is impracticable; can never come into general use, etc.

It is not reasonable to suppose that, after using the old justifying system all our lives—a system that has been in use practically since the introduction of movable types in the art of printing—printers are going to fall in love with an innovation so sweeping in its revision of the sacred customs of the ofice. Therefore, while we do not wish to place any restraint of a free and full criticism of the experiment, we think it but fair to remember that what at first sight may seem hideous often, on better acquaintance, becomes not only tolerable, but it may lose all its formerly apparent disadvantages

One point in favor of the non-justifying system must be acknowledged at the start—economy. There can be no question as to the saving it would entail, both in setting and distributing. It is estimated that in ordinary book work the justifying consumes one-third of the time of setting. Add to this a slight gain in distributing, and we have no small saving in the cost of producing letter-press work. In work on trade journals the saving would, of course, be greater, as of necessity more attention is there given to spacing. In newspaper work, however, the gain would not be so great, but this might be balanced by the absolutely even spacing that would result from the new system.

As remarked before, there is much that might be said for and against the innovation; but, when all is said, the fact remains that it is still "all talk."

For what length of time we will continue the non-justification experiment, we cannot say. That will be left for circumstances to decide. It will require three or four months' sight, probably, to get used to the appearance of the new style. After that time we will be able to better judge of the merits of the system.

As, of course, we can get up the "Art Printer" at considerably less cost than when the old system of justification was in use, after the new system is adopted the subscription rate will be reduced—to what extent will be announced next issue.

Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps.

The Secretary wants every reader of Liberty to send in his name for enrolment. Those who do so thereby pledge themselves to write, when possible, a letter every fortnight, on Anarchism or kindred subjects, to the "target" assigned in Liberty for that fortnight, and to notify the secretary promptly in case of any failure to write to a target (which it is hoped will not often occur), or in case of temporary or permanent withdrawal from the work of the Corps. All, whether members or not, are asked to lose no opportunity of informing the secretary of suitable targets. Address, STEPHEN T. BYINGTON, East Hardwick, Vt.

Target, section A.—Under the title, "Reasons for Anarchy," "The Star," a Single Tax paper, of 429 Montgomery Street, San Francisco, says:

That there are persons who hold and vigorously advocate that persons and honestly-earned property would be more secure without any law-officials than it is with them, is not much to be wondered at in view of the following from the San Jose "Letter":

Then follows a story of blackmail or extortion from a young woman by a policeman, and the subsequent connivance of the courts and district attorney to prevent the issuance of a warrant for the arrest of the offending official.

Show that such things are in the nature of government, and that the whole record of government supports the Anarchistic contention.

Section B.—The Cleveland, O., "Citizen" speaks thus of the visit of Turner, the Anarchist-Communist missionary:

John Turner, the London Anarchist, was in the city this week, and delivered a number of addresses. He had no bombs concealed about his person, and no blood-and thunder sensations accompanied his able speeches. Many who heard him wondered how they had become frightened at the lurid headlines in the newspapers. Mr. Turner is certainly a peace-loving, intelligent, and agreeable gentleman, and a good trade unionist. He has made a friend of every one he met while in the city, and we are sure that Cleveland workingmen and reformers will join us in requesting for Mr. Turner a hearty welcome at the hands of unionists wherever he may go.

Press home the point that there is no good reason why Anarchism should be regarded as implying violence and outrage; tell something of its real aims.

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